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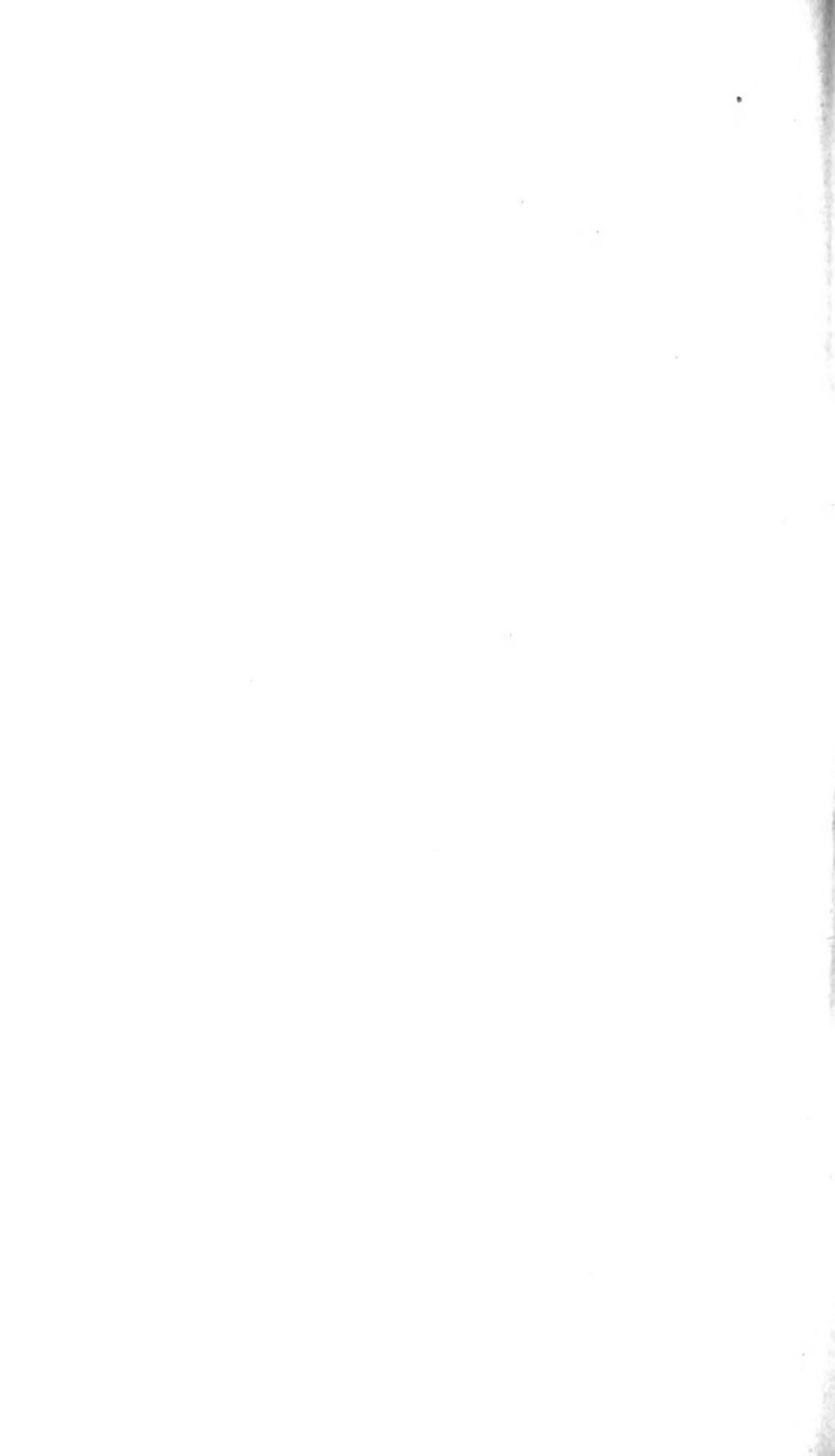
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HUMILIATION AND HOPE:

OR,

THE CHRISTIAN PATRIOT'S DUTY IN THE PRESENT
CRISIS OF OUR NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED NOVEMBER 14, 1862,

THE DAY OF FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER

APPOINTED BY THE SYNOD OF MICHIGAN.

[PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.]

GEORGE DUFFIELD,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF DETROIT.

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S E R M O N .

PSALM 79:8 & 9 :—“ O remember not against us former iniquities ; let Thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low. Help us O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name ; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for Thy name’s sake.”

We can find no more appropriate form of prayer for this day, than these words. Indeed the spirit, if not the language, of this entire Psalm, may be of use to us, in that humiliation of ourselves before God, which the Synod of Michigan has recommended to its congregations, and for which the present circumstances and exigencies of our country loudly and solemnly call, from every Christian patriot. It is entitled “ A Psalm of Asaph,” and is one of those plaintive strains in which the Spirit of God led that holy prophetic seer to tune his harp, and strike its strings, in unison with the moanings of the chill winds of a dark night. It is the cry of distress poured out into the ears of the Righteous Judge of all the earth ; the wail of a widowed heart, importunately pressing its prayer, in a season of great peril and perplexity; just such as the Saviour seems to have had in his view, when applying his own parable of the poor widow and unjust judge, He asks, “ And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, tho’ He bear long with them :”—Luke 18: 7. It seems to have been dictated for the use of the Church in affliction, and tells of martyrdom, whether in the flesh or spirit, or both. It suited well the condition of the Church in Asaph’s days ; and that of the people of God in any and every age and country whenever oppressed, or suffering from calamitous events, and the ravages of war.

Whether persecuted and put to death for the testimony of Jesus, or perilled and perplexed by the fierce ragings of tempestuous passion, breaking forth in disastrous desolating war, God

has always had a remnant in the earth, of whom it has been predicted, that appeal should be made by them to Him, with somewhat of the awful power we feel to be in the cry of the souls, seen in vision beneath the altar—"How long O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth," Rev. 7: 9. Whatever distress of the Church and people of God on earth, wrings from them the enanguished prayer, meets sympathy and response from Heaven. We adduce the text as a guide to direct us in the prayerful and penitent exercises for which this day of fasting, humiliation and prayer has been set apart: "O remember not against us," &c., &c.

It suggests an inquiry into the *reasons for humiliation, and of hope, in the present and perilous crisis of our national affairs.* To this subject we invite your attention—not in the light of party political discussions; but of history, and of the word of God.

1. The prayer in the text comprises confession, made under a deep sense of humiliation, and earnest entreaties for Divine aid and interposition, urged by arguments and motives taken from the character of God.

Confession of sin is an indispensable condition of forgiveness. There will be no confession of sin where there is not a knowledge and sense of sin. Where that knowledge is correct, and a deep sense of the moral turpitude of sin is felt, there will there be a proportional or correspondent humbling of the heart, through a consciousness of moral degradation. In such a state of mind the pride, obstinaey, and rebelliousness of the heart will give way; and the contemplation of the excellent character of God will induce hope of success, in an earnest, confident appeal to Him for pardon, help and salvation.

Our religious services this day will be of little real practical value to ourselves, or to our country, if we do not intelligently apprehend, and humbly acknowledge, the sins, on account of which God is seeking to humble us, by the distress and calamities His providence has brought upon us as a nation. The pastoral letter of the Synod, read in your hearing last Sabbath, has sufficiently enlightened every intelligent reader or hearer, so that it is not needful here, to-day, for us to ask what sins may be called

national, or what are the particular sins of this nation for which God has a controversy with us. The prayer contained in the text involves one or two principles important to notice, as preparatory, and of use to us in the inquiry we propose.

THE FIRST IS, THAT THE GREAT AND OBVIOUS DESIGN TO BE HAD, IN CONSIDERING NATIONAL SINS, BY THOSE WHO WOULD PRAY ARIGHT, is, TO HAVE THE HEART SO AFFECTIONED AND HUMBLED IN VIEW OF THEM, AS TO BE WILLING FRANKLY AND INGENUOUSLY TO CONFESS THEM.

There may be, and there is reason to fear that there have been, inquiries and discussions as to the national *sins*, which tended and were often intended, more for party strife, debate, and gratification of hatred and malice, than for real humbling of the heart before God. In all true penitential prayers, the heart must be brought low in its own account, and not be lifted up in rash censorious and self-righteous spirit toward others. “Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness; is it such a feast that I have chosen?” said God, by the mouth of His prophet Isaiah. Such praying and fasting will do more harm than good.

THE SECOND principle implied in the prayer contained in the text, is, THAT IN CONSIDERING NATIONAL SINS, WITH A VIEW TO HUMILIATION AND CONFESSION, THOSE PRESENTLY PREVALENT MUST BE REGARDED IN THEIR CONNECTION WITH, AND TRACED UP TO, THEIR APPROPRIATE SOURCES, IN THE SINS OF A FORMER PERIOD. “O remember not against us former iniquities.”

The sins of to-day, in individual history, have a relation to those of days and years past,—often as the effect stands related to its cause. One sin begets another. The sins of *youth* produce their baneful results in mature age. Like the flowing fountain, the stream can be traced to its source. One lie, or crime, is often the parent of hundreds and thousands. If we would be truly humbled, and confess our sins, we must deplore, not only the sins of to-day but of yesterday; not only of this week, or month, or year, but of all the past period of our lives. This principle is equally applicable in considering the sins of a nation which call for humbling and confession. The sinful customs, legislation, or arrangements, of one generation, unfold themselves in the multi-

plied and aggravated crimes and corruptions of others following. As in families, the iniquities of fathers are visited upon their children, so do the crimes of a nation accumulate, as transmitted from generation to generation, and age to age.

The vices now prevalent in society, which distinctly mark the nation's guilt, may all of them be traced back, and found connected with those of a former period in our history. Thus, the public desecration of the Sabbath extending so rapidly in our land, if not originated, was greatly promoted and sanctioned, by the example of the governmental authorities, which first became gross and glaring, during the war of 1812, with Great Britain. The plea of necessity then led to the transportation of the mail between our large cities on the Sabbath; and altho' there was no authority or sanction of law, for contracts to be made by the Postmaster-General for that purpose, except on the six secular days of the week, yet in despite of numerous and strong popular remonstrances, the evil continued unabated by the Federal authorities. The result was, the laws of different States on the subject gave way to federal usurpation. Decisions of supreme courts in States, and especially in Pennsylvania, relative to what had previously been regarded as a breach of the peace, overruled the usages and construction of law previously protecting the Sabbath, and providing punishment for its violation. The day in various ways, unpracticed before, gradually thereafter became secularised. The strong public sentiment on the subject previously, became neutralized. Diversions, and means of hilarious indulgence, were extensively substituted, for the healthful influence of public worship, for the moral and religious teachings of the sanctuary. Thus, a generation was educated to walk in the sins of their fathers. Sabbath laws becoming obsolete, through want of enforcement, they now remain a dead letter on our statute books.

This evil has been greatly aggravated by the annual immigration, by hundreds of thousands, of a foreign population; of which a French writer, of great power, has justly, but cautiously, remarked, that they "have not always been the *elite* of the old world," and must "have necessarily introduced into the decision

of public affairs, some elements of immorality." The result has been, that the Sabbath has not only lost its strong barriers of protection by law, but open war has been made against its moral and religious influences as restraints upon liberty, and an invasion of personal and social rights.

The same remarks may be made in relation to the national sin of intemperance, which is the prolific parent of three-fourths of the crimes that render jails and penitentiaries necessary to protect society, and nine-tenths of the pauperism and squalid wretchedness, demanding costly poor-houses, hospitals, and lunatic and drunkard's asylums; and also of the enormous taxes levied for the support of criminal justice, and the relief of the destitute, diseased and degraded. The "license system" of former generations, which makes the State, under pretext of controlling the evil, the patron and promoter of drunkenness and its ever attendant crimes,—has developed itself in results, which have exposed us to the calumnious charge of being a nation of drunkards. It is true, there has been a sore and steady contest going on, on this subject, for the last third of a century; and curative and sanitary legislation with moral measures, have been employed to resist and to raise the dykes needed to save us from the rising, swelling ocean-tides of intemperance, that have threatened to inundate us. But the prohibitions of statutory and of organic constitutional laws, thus far, have been neutralized, thro' the want of fidelity to their trust, on the part of official functionaries, and the failing of enlightened public sentiment, of moral virtue in the masses, to sustain and demand their enforcement.

The guilt of a former generation, in fostering by its license law, the giant vice of intemperance, has culminated in hosts of crimes, that are its legitimate offspring, and as a direct consequence, in the prevalent spirit of lawlessness, which has impeded and defied to a great extent, the execution of law, and the administration of criminal justice. Our fathers sowed the wind, and we are reaping the harvest of licentiousness, which, God only knows how soon, may become the whirlwind of anarchy, confusion, dismemberment, and dissolution of our Federal, State and municipal governments.

In thus tracing back to the appropriate sources our national sins, as reasons for humiliation and confession, we should be unfaithful to our Master, our country, and to you, beloved hearers, did we not especially notice that, which, undeniably, it is admitted on all hands, by men of every grade of political sentiment and party attachments, is the immediate, and by the Southern seceding States, the avowed cause, of this war of rebellion now looming up in such colossal proportions, and producing so much disaster and distress. We mean the slavery, transmitted from former generations. Our revolutionary fathers, almost universally, regarded it as an evil, not only social and political, but also moral. Washington a christian, and Jefferson an unbeliever, with hosts of other bright luminaries in our political galaxy, deprecated it as a bane and curse, and trembled in view of the future retributions of a righteous God.

The men of moral worth and heroic faith, who fled from persecution and oppression in the old, and carried with them to this new world, nothing but their Bibles, to lay "the foundation of a free country with poor and valiant hands," described it, and denounced it as an incubus and entailment, imposed upon the Colonies by a tyrannous rule, and dreaded its perpetuation as an omen and harbinger of certain terrible evils in the future, if not removed before the growth of a century should give it giant proportions. They favored, and to some extent succeeded in their attempts at, gradual abolition. But slavery had taken deeper root, and more extensively in the Southern than in the Northern soil, and could not easily be eradicated. The representatives of the people, in framing the Constitution of the United States, felt constrained to tolerate it; but feared and refused to speak of it by its proper name. "Sad, profoundly sad," it has been well and truly said, "is the spectacle of nations wherein we make no noise." It was let alone. Perhaps it was all that could be done by those who hoped that the future would take care of itself. "Would to God" exclaims an eloquent writer, and friend of our beloved country, "that slavery had not been let alone, when the Republic of the United States was founded! Then abolition was easy, the slaves were few in number, and no really formidable antagonism was

in play. Unhappily, false prudence made itself heard : it was resolved to keep silence, and not to deprive the South of the honor of a voluntary emancipation—in fine, to reserve, the question for the future. The future has bent under the weight of a task, which has continued to increase with years,—thanks to letting it alone. A little more letting alone, and the weight would have crushed America."

As a nation, God has made us "possess the iniquities of our youth." "Our fathers have sinned, and are not ; and we have borne their iniquities." We quote the language of Scripture appropriate to the case, not by way of reproach, but as matter of actual undeniable history. The sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, no more truly made Israel to sin, than have the iniquities of a former day, in this land of boasted freedom and Christianity, borne down to us a heavily freighted load of guilt, which has water logged the ship of state, and apparently, uninfluenced by the helm and steerage of the pilot, is floating toward the breakers. May the good and gracious Lord, "who holds the winds in his fist," quickly appear, walking on the billows, for the rescue of the foundering bark, and salvation of the crew.

We shall not, however, in our cries of distress, to-day addressed to Him, attain that depth of humiliation, and sincerity of confession, of present and former iniquities, if we adopt the same fatal policy of our fathers, and ignore or defiantly refuse to deplore, the slavery which has been so prolific of evils, social, moral, political and sectional, in which we now find ourselves whirled, driven, and seemingly ready to break and sink in the vortex of our national ruin. In this, as well as in other of our national sins, we may and ought to find reason for humiliation. They have not only rendered us displeasing to God, but disgraced us before men; and made us a by-word and reproach among the nations. Abundant reason is there for humiliation. Concealment, silence, excuse, palliation, justification, reciprocal obloquies, can never befit the exercise of that repentance which is necessary to avert the demerited wrath of God. It behoves us to look steadily, calmly, and fully into the face of our present actual condition, that we may meet, intelligently as a Christian people, the approaching solemn crisis of our national affairs.

As a nation we are suffering, bleeding, staggering, under the heavy pressure of enormous evils. A gigantic war stretches itself over us from Maine to Mexico. A ferocious rebellion, at the end of two years from its inception, still bids our million host defiance, and menaces with salient pride our capitol. Many of our Generals, from whom impatient multitudes made impetuous demands for crushing out the rebellion, and on whom the nation's eyes and hearts were set, have failed to meet their cherished expectations. Anathemas are substituted for acclamation; maladictions and curses for laudations and blessings. Distrust and dissatisfaction with the ruling authorities, from the President down through all departments, have been loudly and unmistakably expressed. Frequent vacillation and mistakes have seriously damaged popular confidence in the executive and his cabinet. The elements of factious and party strife are at work. We are rending ourselves, and irritating wounds which need care and nursing to heal. Reciprocal charges, and angry cries of treason are alienating hearts and kindling the malignant fires of passion. The cockatrice eggs are laid—"He that eateth of them dieth; that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper." The elements of anarchy are becoming more and more obvious; and confusion may at any moment be waked into terrible action. Avaricious selfish cupidities have become voracious. The idol of mammon is exalted above the honor of God and the interest of country. Like the pernicious *grub* that nourished and developed at the root or on the bark, silently excoriates and slowly saps the life of the stately oak, hosts of *ÆGERIA (borers)* and parasitical growths have made the noble tree of American liberty droop its stately head, and give indications of decay.

The crimes and corruptions of Europe have been extensively imported. The licentiousness and lawlessness of a large portion of the foreign population, which the unsuccessful revolutions of 1848 had thrown upon our shores, have organized and acquired a dangerous force. At no distant day they may renew here the scenes of anarchy, which then, for a season, threatened to shake down the thrones and governments of Europe. Our large cities contain the embers of a slumbering

volcano. Elements are gathering there, which, if not kept under the restraints of moral and religious influence, and civil and municipal law, may ere long burst forth with earthquake violence. An observant foreigner has said, with pregnant truth, "the greater part of the immigrants remain, of course, in the large cities; here they come almost to make the laws, and here too, noble causes encounter the most opponents. Contempt of the colored class, that crime of the North," he adds, "breaks out most of all in large cities, and particularly among agglomerations of immigrants; none are harsher to free negroes, it must be admitted," he continues, "than newly landed Europeans, who have come to seek a fortune in America."

Have we not cause of humiliation, therefore, in view of present national sins and evils, descending from the past? They may, if God withdraws His providential care, at no very distant day, become fearful agents of destruction! We occupy not, to day, the lofty moral position we once had among the nations of the earth. The prestige of our noble fame has suffered greatly. The character and power of our Christianity and religion have been insufficient to save us from the shame and disgrace of civil war, and the just reproach of brethren, in families and in churches, once united by consecrated ties, turned against each other with ferocious and malignant hate. Well may we blush, and be ashamed to lift up our face, as Ezra said, while in deep humiliation we should cry "O remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, (*i.e.*, come before, crowd in front of us,) for we are brought very low." But all is not lost; nor all means and opportunities for the re-establishment of the government, Union, and future prosperity of our country.

II. THERE ARE SOURCES AND REASONS FOR HOPE TO CHEER US AMID THE GLOOM AND DARKNESS AND PERILS THAT SURROUND US. We allude not to our material resources of wealth or numbers, and capability of severer endurance and mightier resistance, even if foreign powers, which seems not now probable, should openly nourish and abet the rebellion that has cost the entire nation the sacrifice of two hundred thousand lives, and hundreds of millions

of treasure. Let public functionaries, generals, statesmen, and judicious conductors of the press do this. But we refer to other and greater. All natural resources fail a people, if God abandons them to the just consequences of their iniquities. The grounds of hope, and arguments in prayer to God, of which we speak, are the resources we may have in our Lord Jesus Christ, our own and our father's God. Two additional principles in the text suggest them.

There is *first* the GLORIOUS CHARACTER OF HIM TO WHOM WE PRAY. "Help us O God of our salvation for the glory of thy name."

He is a Saviour God, and not a destroying foe. As such it conduces more to His honor, and delights Him more, to help and save than to punish and destroy. Here then is one great argument, with which we may, and ought to, make our appeal to Him. There are great interests of truth and right, of morality and religion, of civilization and humanity at stake, and awfully perilled by this patricidal rebellion, that may justly, and ought most powerfully to awaken our earnest solicitudes. We may indeed possibly err, in attempting to scan and grasp the views and plan of Omniscience. But from all the lights of history, the precedents of scripture, the sanction and guidance of its principles, and the present indications of Divine Providence, we may, we think, in truth, affirm, that God's honor and glory seem to be deeply and intimately involved in the preservation of this land, and of the union of its several States.

It is not only a land of freedom, an asylum for the oppressed of all nations, as it has been for generations; but it is a land of religious liberty, where God alone is recognized and honored as the Lord of conscience. It is a land that has attained that liberty, thro' the blessing of His Providence, on the bold magnanimous assertion of right and truth, made by our fathers, in reliance upon the God of their salvation. It is a land of Bibles, where religion knows no unhallowed union of Church and State, and asks no greater power for its support than the Spirit of God Himself. It is a land of primary and Sunday schools, of seminaries and colleges for both sexes, where education rules, and woman, God's

last and best natural gift to man, is cherished, honored and exalted, to exert the mild, mellowing and mighty influence of her sex, for all that is good and generous, noble and patriotic, benevolent and God-like. It is a land of Christian churches, and Christian missions, of Christian philanthropy and charity, of private benevolence, and profuse public liberality. These are all instruments and agents for good, which meet the mind and delight the heart of God our Saviour, who lived, and died, and sacrificed himself to save the lost. What an argument may we thence derive with which to make our appeal to Him, as we trace the bearing of these things yet upon this land, and through it, upon the best interests of the world, and the glory of God. True, we have our vices and corruptions, our inconsistencies, contradictions, and systems of oppression and mischief, not yet put away from us, which call loudly for repentance and reformation. But they have not yet filled up our cup of iniquity, as a doomed people, and caused, all that is just and pure, and holy, and noble, and of good report, to effervesce, and overflow, and leave but the fetid dregs of crime behind. May we not then humbly and devoutly cherish the hope, that God has not yet cast us off, but is preparing us, by suffering, for a higher destiny, to subserve the great ends of His own glory?

A SECOND source or ground of hope for the future, we may discern in a further principle, implied in the text, viz. : IN THE OFFICE AND DESIGN OF JESUS CHRIST, PROPOSED TO OUR FAITH, AS THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION, AND THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD. "Help us O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us and purge away our sins, for Thy name's sake." God's name is in the Lord Jesus Christ; "My name," saith Jehovah, "is in Him." His work on earth is to deliver from perdition, and purge away sin. If we, as a nation, therefore, or if the great mass of Christian people in this land, will rouse, and exert their influence, to reform the corruptions in society, so that the governmental authorities enact and enforce just laws, and maintain the right, then may we confidently hope, that the future of our country will be blessed and glorious. The Lord's controversy with us, and the need of chastisement will cease; and Jesus

Christ, the God of our salvation, will perfect for us the deliverance, it is His office and glory to accomplish, for them that trust and honor Him." "Is not this," says he by His prophet, "the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him ; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer."—Isa. 58. Faith can use this argument, and inspire the humbled heart with hope.

But unbelief has its doubts and fears. The timid and desponding are ready to say, "Let the war cease; have done with it almost on any terms. Let the Southern seceding States go, and take with them for ever the complications of their own slavery, for which they have raised the standard of rebellion." "The emancipation to which the President, in accordance with law, and upon the plea of a military necessity, has pledged the nation," say others, "is a thing morally, politically, and physically impossible. To attempt to execute it will be tyrannical usurpation, a violation of the Constitution, and the ruin of both North and South." But, when the thing is just, and morally right, and will make for His own glory, God loves, in His providence, to accomplish what men account impossibilities. Ordinary rules of human judgment meet not the emergencies of extraordinary occasions, when He undertakes to answer prayer, and to accomplish His will and designs of love and mercy in the earth.

Let us then, for a few moments, in conclusion, repress all our party prejudices and hates, and timid unbelieving doubts, and despondence, and calmly endeavor to look upon, what many account a black and gathering tempest, looming up in horrible portentous darkness, already high above the horizon. May not, and cannot God, in His providence, accomplish what we judge impracticable ? Who will limit the resources of His wisdom and power ?

But we may not ask for miracles, says unbelief. And yet the Bible is full of examples, offered for our encouragement and hope, of miracles wrought in the earth, in answer to the prayer of faith. James 5: 16-18. Call it miracle, or wonder, or extraordinary interposition of Providence, or whatever else you please, numerous and marvellous are the instances of signal deliverances wrought in the earth in the history of individuals, and of nations, in answer to prayer. Shall we then, as Christian patriots, cowardly shrink from the responsibilities of the occasion, and consult the oracles of party or prejudice, at the suggestion of unbelief, rather than the oracles of God? Who will or dare deny, that God does answer prayer, when offered in penitence and faith, and the thing asked is for His honor, and befitting His glory to accomplish.

It is true, He never fulfils our request exactly in the way we may dictate to Him, or expect. His wisdom infinitely excels ours. Prayer answered by God is always in such way as to humble us, and to exalt Himself, so that it shall be seen, that He has infinite resources, and can, by most unlikely and unlooked for means, most easily accomplish, what to the unbelieving mind appeared impossible. May not His providence be about to give this nation, and the world through it, an illustration of this thing? If He has said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," shall any of us timidly start back, and hesitate, or dread, to put Him to the test? and in this very matter experiment upon His faithfulness? Whether we, or any or all of us, as Christian patriots, will or will not take part in this morally sublime experiment, upon the Divine faithfulness, it is one that has been in process for years, and seems to be fast approaching its consummation. It meets us this day, under marked conditions, and appeals to all the nobler feelings of our human and Christian hearts.

Multitudes, both in the North and in the South, have been for years earnestly and devoutly praying to God, for the abolition of slavery, with its myriad ills and abominations. Let not the term startle us and electrify our prejudices. It is a great historic fact. Say and think, what we may, about the motives of nu-

merous suppliants, God knows them much better than we can. And He can separate between the gold and dross, the precious and the vile. Who is prepared to say, that the cries of His elect, in numerous instances, have not entered into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts? And that He has not appointed this as the set time to answer them, tho' like a clap of thunder in a clear sky, it has taken the nation by surprise? It will not justify our unbelieving fears to say, we did not look for it, we thought it impossible, we think it might have been let alone, or attempted in some other and better way; nor that we foresee terrible suffering, dangerous excitement, party collisions, disastrous results for both master and slave; nor, that there may be and are much of wickedness in conduct, and malice in motive, on the part of many, who have for a quarter of a century kept the subject in constant and irritating agitation. Our prudence is not the rule of Divine providence. Nor is it for us to dictate to His Sovereignty. When He undertakes to act, in the affairs of men, either to chasten or to benefit a people, He uses the means He finds most appropriate, and at hand.

Of necessity, in the exercise of a mediatorial government over a guilty world, wicked men as well as righteous men, will be found associated in various civil, social, and national relations. God's providence embraces all, and He that "makes the wrath of man to praise Him," and "restrains the remainder of wrath," in undertaking to accomplish the great designs of His providence, works by the corrupt as well as holy. Whether it be erring prophets, delirious kings, rulers stricken with madness, persecutors, selfish, foes, or friends, when God means to do good, by what they mean for evil, He can so overrule and order, as he did in Joseph, and his brethren's history," to save much people alive.

That which, then, seems to be of chief concern in this matter to us as Christian men and women, is the inquiry, is there anything morally wrong, on the part of the governmental authority, and its measures, which we cannot, with a good conscience, submit to, and support? This is a question to be answered, not by party platforms, policy or pretexts; but by prayerful consultation with God, our Lawgiver and Judge, in the candid, honest, exam-

ination of His own word. If a good conscience does not require us to make ourselves martyrs for God and Christ, by rebelling against those in authority, piety toward God, and loyalty to country, require us to obey them that rule over us.

The most zealous partizan and advocate of the cause of secession, cannot claim, that, by rebelling against the authority of the United States, for the protection and perpetuation of slavery, in opposition to the scorn of the world, they who are so engaged, and leading on their followers by despotic force, are piously and meritoriously making themselves martyrs for God's sake and Christ's sake. Here then we must meet, and cannot honestly dodge, the question, forced upon us by the providence of God. Have we a sufficient justifying reason for disobedience, and denunciation of the ruling authorities, and thus sympathising and taking co-operative part with the rebellion? In reply it may, and perhaps will be said, the prospective emancipation contingently proclaimed by the President, is an exercise of power not given him as a civil ruler by the constitution. True. But that same constitution confers on Congress, the power "to declare war," "to raise and support armies and a navy," "to make rules for their government," and "to enact ALL laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution" these and kindred powers. Act 1, sec. 7. It also makes the President Commander-in-Chief, of the army and navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several States, when called into actual service, and holds him pledged, by oath, faithfully to execute his office.

Both Congress, and the President as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, have acted in their respective functions, and declared the emancipation of the slaves of those in rebellion to be necessary and proper, in the prosecution of the war, initiated by rebellion, and unavoidable in defence and support of the constitution, and the administration of the government. That necessity having been publicly declared by the constitutional authorities, the alternative presented to our consciences in this matter, is simply, submission to lawful government, on the one hand, or rebellion against it on the other. This is the dilemma

in which every citizen for the present is placed. Though it has been through the agency of men, it is by the hand of Providence. We cannot possibly avoid it, or postpone it to a future demonstration at the polls. It is important for us, therefore, to ask, whether this prospective emancipation already proclaimed, may not be the very way, which God, in his providence, has seen fitting as the initial step for the removal of an evil, and a reproach to this nation, for which, since the very origin of the government, prayer has not ceased to be made in the land, North, South, East, and West?

Whatever may be our fears, and our predictions ; whatever the aggravations of horror and wretchedness, or the gildings of hope and joy, that any of us may think we see, in the dark rising cloud, it ushers in a crisis of immeasurable and tremendous magnitude. It ought not to be regarded with indifference, by any ; and cannot be dismissed with inattention by the patriotic, sober minded citizen, or praying Christian. One of the most amazing events, ever recorded in history, approaches us—the instant liberation by edict of war, of more than three millions of slaves; which, if accomplished, must necessarily draw after it, the enfranchisement, sooner or later, of one million more. It approaches us as one of the grandest epochs in the history of our country ; and throws upon Congress, at its coming session, a responsibility, and calls for the solution of problems, unspeakably important to the safety and happiness of millions of our population, both white and black. Is the nation about to perpetrate a wrong, or to consummate a good, to either or to both the races among whom universal emancipation is, after the 1st of January, 1863, to be the accomplished fact, and the policy FOR EVER, to which its faith shall be pledged ?

Humanity asks, what shall be the disposition made of the ignorant, penniless millions, with their hosts of helpless, young, infirm, sick and aged imbeciles, soon to be introduced into liberty, by the power of the government, if it be competent, with its million hosts, to do it ? It will be for Congress to meet its awful responsibilities herein, by the investigations and legislation demanded at their hands, in the name of virtue, patriot-

ism, humanity, and of God. The President has suggested some, and promised other means of mitigating anticipated ills. Colonization, and deportation to foreign countries, can never meet the overwhelming magnitude of the exigency. They must prove but feeble rills. As a means of entire and adequate potency, they are just as absurd as they are impracticable. What then is to be, or can be, done with the slave population? They love the soil that gave them birth, the climate in which they have been bred, and, many of them, the masters and mistresses whom they serve, however dear and desirable freedom is to them all. The masses of them will not leave for the North unless forced to do so. They must encounter, if they do, armed prejudices, and combinations of hostile influence, and even force, such as have already displayed themselves, on the part of those who fear such accessions would reduce wages so low as to prove ruinous to free laboring men. Moreover, the abstracting of their labor from the South would be fatal to all its agricultural interests. It would be to devastate and destroy, more fatally than by war, the possessions, property, and population of the Southern States; and thus seriously and permanently derange and damage the manufacturing and commercial interests, both of the North and of the nations of Europe. Hence it is thought, that enfranchisement is, and can only be, so fraught with evil and suffering, that it cannot be the will of a benevolent Providence; and, therefore, prayer can never be made in faith, or be pleasing to God.

But it may be well, in our attempt to estimate our duty, and the future destiny of our country, to inquire here, whether the providence of God cannot so obviate all these evils, however solemn and portentous they seem, as to make, what, at first sight, may appear enormous unmitigated ill, a real and lasting blessing, to both the white and black races in the Southern States? If the slaves can have the protection of law, be allowed the rights of marriage, and of the parental and filial relations, be put upon a moral equality—just the equality that the moral law recognizes and assumes as common and inalienable to all;—and the means and obligations of self support, by industrial labor for proper wages, be conceded, under some proper and salutary sys-

tem of tenantry, or serfdom, or apprenticeship, the enslaved population will have all, at present needed and desired by them, and the planters, farmers, and white population of the South, also, will have what they need, and with less peril, perplexity, and expense for their laborers.

The question of social equality can never be settled by human legislation. It will ever be subject to the decisions of taste, and the condition of society. That of political equality pertains, and must ever do so, to the decisions of State sovereignty. The Synod of Michigan has said nothing on the subject of social and political equality, but only of moral, which concedes to every partaker of humanity, that he is not a chattel, not a beast of burden, but a human being, and, as such, should be allowed, for the honor of God and best interests of society, to qualify himself by education, morality, and religion, for the rights and privileges of a citizen, whether as a member of the Church, the city of our God, or of the civil community. The denial of such moral equality, is to brutalize a portion of humanity. These questions, and those of compensation, with matters incidental, will demand the wisdom and co-operation of all the friends of God and man. As for those who will not allow discussion, and will not calmly look at the subject, which God, in His providence, has thrust upon our attention, but will bluster in rage, and impeach motive, and traduce their friends and neighbors, fired by party zeal and prejudice on either hand, they neither know, nor can appreciate, what true freedom is, and cannot be its safe conservators.

One word more, and we have done with this attempt to estimate our duty, and reasons of hope for the future of our country, in view of what is thought by many, to be the perilous experiment of emancipation, as proclaimed by the President. Many who concede and claim, both morally and legally, the right of property, in man, regard the emancipation proclaimed as a robbery to be perpetrated by power, which cannot meet the approbation of God. To this, in our own, and in the opinion of many others, it will be sufficient to remark, that in strict justice, according to the sanction of the Divine law, and the example and

illustration, given by the God of Israel, in His own theocratic constitution and code, the fact of rebellion against lawful authority persisted in, rightfully induces not only a forfeiture of property, but of life. Let Ezra be the commentator here : " Whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment."—Ezra 7: 26.

To what extent, however, such justice shall be exacted, is to be left to the consideration of clemency and mercy on the part of the Judge. On this point we will not here insist. Nehemiah's administration deserves careful study. Nehemiah 5: 9-13. For our own part, and we frankly state it as our own personal opinion, thirty years since maturely adopted, and publicly stated, we think there is much of fallacy in the plea urged against the destruction of the property, and alleged robbery, and impoverishment, of slaveholders, by emancipation. It may be made such; but it is not necessarily so. For there is possible, and easy too, such an exercise of wisdom, by a well devised and guarded system of emancipation, as to make it a boon, and means of enrichment rather than of impoverishment to the slaveholder.

We speak not, now, of trade in slaves; nor of propagating and rearing slaves for the market, as is done legitimately with sheep, swine, and other brute animals. It is an offence alike against God and man, and is, to a very great extent, abhorred and condemned by honest, upright, pious slaveholders at the South themselves. But we speak of slaves as thought and claimed to be the capital indispensable to agriculture, by the growth of cotton, indigo, sugar, and other staples, appropriate to Southern climates and soil. Suppose a planter needs 100 slaves, to accomplish the labor of his farm or plantation. Say that, on an average, they are worth \$500 apiece. Estimated in dollars and cents, this working capital is set down at the sum of \$50,000. Admit that the slaveholder can sell them for that round sum. You say to emancipate them by law, proclamation, or any other way, would be to inflict on him the loss of just that amount. We say, not necessarily so. For, suppose the planter voluntarily

disposes of them himself, and puts that amount into his pocket. It is true, he may remove, and carry that amount with him, if he can favorably sell his lands, and quit the country. But suppose now—which supposition meets the cases most numerous, and most in point,—that this planter, who has sold his 100 slaves, must, or wills to, live on his estate, and work it, for his support and enrichment, as he has ever done; he must go at once into market, and as his 100 slaves were needed, buy just that amount of others, at the market rates; and what has he gained by the operation? Nothing but a change of laborers. Not a dollar has he really added to his cash capital. Of necessity, it has been reinvested as before, and the change is just as likely to have proved a loss as a gain.

But now, suppose that the laws of his State, and some wise and equitable system of emancipation, enable him to retain these slaves, not as slaves, but as laborers, so that, while conceding to them the freedom of their persons, families, and homes, and instituting a judicious benignant tenantry, he employs and gets their labor for wages, without any obligation of other support from him,—then he has not only secured the amount of necessary labor, he had before, to be even better and more cheerfully rendered, but he has actually created, to some extent, a market at his own door, for what had previously been consumed and wasted, at his expense. Emancipation on the soil will thus be rendered the means of economy and thrift. Such has been the working of emancipation, actually, where wisdom and benevolence have planned and carried it out, in other lands; and that too, the more quickly and certainly, just as the laborer, dependent on his employer, has seen or been convinced, that his landlord is his friend and guardian.

The case thus stated is not ideal. May we not then hope, that there will be found wisdom, benevolence, and Christianity enough in our country, when the pressure of necessity, in the providence of God, shall be brought to bear upon the South, and also that there will be wisdom of legislation in Congress, and kindness, fidelity, and firmness, in the executive department of government, by some process of emancipation judiciously pro-

vided for, to relieve the South, from an incubus upon their prosperity, which they have ever felt with terrible and fretting severity? In praying for it, therefore, we may pray for what, if God give his blessing, and direct the change, we can see, shall prove of incalculable benefit to master and to slave; serve to heal existing wounds and exacerbations; confirm the Unity, and promote the prosperity, of the country; advance the interests of humanity; and secure honor and glory to God.

We have sought, beloved hearers, to transfer our whole thoughts and heart to you on this subject, and to give you the analysis of it, as it has long lain in our own mind, regardless of parties, pro or anti, on so weighty and solemn a subject, at such a momentous crisis in our nation's affairs.* If we can lay hold upon the arm of God, and link the interests of our country with His throne, we are safe. We need not fear the result if we are with Him, and do right. He will be with us, our armies, our navies, our counsellors; they are all in His hands.

We have erred in looking to man alone to direct them. It is our privilege and duty to look to a power above man; and in this day of darkness, peril, and dismay, implore help from the God of our salvation. There is such a thing as benefitting others greatly, by means wisely and benevolently employed, which, at the time, they may object to, and think injurious; but afterwards will acknowledge to have been a blessing. Should this be the result of the war rebellion has provoked and rendered unavoidable, the coming generations, both North and South together, will rejoice and be thankful. The country will become yet more prosperous, and renowned, and God be glorified. Who will not say, Amen and amen?

God bless our native land !
Firm may she ever stand,
Thro' storm and night ;

* The views unfolded above, were published by the author of this discourse in the New York Commercial Advertiser and Spectator, in a series of essays, in 1834-5, urging a *pro-rata* dividend of the surplus revenue to the State, for the purpose of inducing slave States severally to adopt some system of gradual emancipation, of their own enactment. The Editor, Col. Stone, commended the idea, but added, the public mind was not prepared for it.

When the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave,
Do Thou our country save,
By Thy great might.

For her our prayer shall rise,
To God above the skies ;
On Him we wait ;
Thou who hast heard each sigh,
Watching each weeping eye,
Be Thou for ever nigh,—
God save the State !

ERRATA.—For “we,” in 7th line from the bottom, on page 8, read *crime*. For “Joseph,” in 8th line from the bottom of page 16, read *Joseph's*.



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